

Measuring diverse impacts of agriculture and conservation interventions in tropical forest landscapes: bringing human wellbeing into focus

Type: Innovative and Immersive Sessions

A panel session with multi-media presentations (audio, video, photography, drawings etc).

Organizers: Julie G. Zaehring, Rachel Carmenta, Judith Schleicher

Session Description:

Landscape transformations at the forest agricultural nexus in the Global South are a major element of global environmental change. Numerous environment-related interventions have been implemented to influence such change trajectories towards more sustainable outcomes. These include strict conservation and agricultural intensification interventions representing two extremes of land sparing. Various interventions fall in-between these extremes, coupling agricultural investments with measures for forest protection and potentially representing forms of land sharing. While strict conservation strategies have been criticised for failing to incorporate human needs, agricultural intensification interventions have also raised concerns, including over their negative environmental impacts. Thus, coupled strategies that combine increased agricultural returns, with mechanisms for forest protection, have been proposed as preferable options. Yet, win-win outcomes are far from certain. Further, particular dimensions, such as non-material flows from nature to people (including relational values and place-based attachments to the land, locally defined priorities for human well-being or distinct impacts for particular user groups), are often under-explored in conventional impact evaluation approaches. This lack of focus highlights that discussions are needed (1) on the diverse impacts of distinct types of interventions across scales (from national to local), (2) on how they are being evaluated, and (3) about the politics of who decides what to measure. This interactive session will explore these three themes and present cases where the impact of environment-related interventions has been documented, with a particular focus on human well-being. The panel and discussion will centre on the forested tropics of the Global South and use interactive presentations that draw on synthesis and empirical research.

Session format (1.5h):

The session will comprise two parts, a panel followed by an interactive discussion session that involves the audience. The panel will comprise five speakers, who will give short presentations (5 min) on complementary topics, drawing on novel communication approaches that integrate video, audio, and photography. The panel will then take questions from the audience, followed by group discussions. Participants can join one of three groups, each discussing for 25 min one of the three session themes. Each group will feedback their main discussion points to the whole group. The session will end with an overall discussion and the five panel members responding to the key points raised by the three discussion groups.

Panel speakers:

- 1) Examining diverse impacts across a typology of environment-related intervention strategies at the forest agricultural nexus: insights from Latin America (Rachel Carmenta, University of Cambridge)
- 2) Impact of agricultural intensification on livelihoods, human well-being and conservation (Laura Rasmussen, University of British Columbia)
- 3) Land use and human well-being changes in the context of conservation and cash crop booms: case studies from Madagascar (Jorge Llopis, University of Bern)
- 4) Connection with nature among colonist farmers at the Transamazon Highway deforestation frontier highway (Kasia Mokolajczak, Lancaster University)
- 5) Who measures and what counts: thinking about capturing human well-being across scales (Judith Schleicher, University of Cambridge)